

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 090995

EXDIS

FOL SAN JOSE 1349 SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC, CARACAS MAR
28, 1978 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T SAN JOSE 1349
EXDIS
FOR ARA, AMBASSADOR TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, MOPS, CU, UR, VE, BR, CS
SUBJECT: BRIEFINGS OF SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS ON CUBAN
INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 075151

1. CALLED ON FONMIN FACIO AFTERNOON OF MARCH 27 TO CONSULT
ON CUBAN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA AND TO SOLICIT HIS VIEWS
AND REACTIONS. FACIO IS GENERALLY WELL INFORMED ON CUBAN
ROLE IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA AND QUICKLY NOTED THAT IN BOTH
CASES CUBAN INVOLVEMENT CONSTITUTED A SOVIET-INSPIRED
OBSTACLE TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS. HE ALSO
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AGREED THAT SHOULD CUBANS IN MOZAMBIQUE BECOME ACTIVELY
INVOLVED IN RHODESIA PROSPECTS FOR PEACE THERE WOULD BE
DAMAGED SEVERELY. ALTHOUGH FACIO WAS AWARE THAT
CUBANS WERE PRESENT ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, HE WAS SURPRISED
TO LEARN OF THE MAGNITUDE OF TOTAL PERSONNEL AND NUMBER OF
COUNTRIES IN AFRICA IN WHICH THEY ARE INVOLVED.

2. FACIO'S EXPRESSION OF VIEWS ON CUBAN MOTIVES IN AFRICAN INTERVENTION DIFFERED SOMEWHAT FROM THOSE PREVIOUSLY EXPOUNDED BY PRESIDENT ODUBER. ODUBER HAS REPEATEDLY INDICATED THAT HE REGARDS CUBAN ACTIONS IN AFRICA AS DESIGNED TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE TO ENHANCE CUBA'S POLITICAL APPEAL TO AFRICAN-ORIGIN POPULATIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND EAST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA. FACIO, IN ADDITION TO ACKNOWLEDGING THE EFFECT OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES BY THE SOVIET UNION, BELIEVES CASTRO HAS SEIZED UPON THE AFRICAN ARENA TO GET HIMSELF BACK INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT.

HE SAID CUBAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE HAS HAD CONTACT SEE ABSOLUTELY NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THEIR OWN ACTIONS IN ANGOLA, ETHIOPIA, AND ELSEWHERE, AND THEIR CRITICISM OF OTHERS FOR ALLEGED ACTS OF INTERVENTION. HE SAID THAT WHILE MOST CUBANS MAY BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE ACTING OUT OF THEIR OWN DEEP SENSE OF IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT MORE THAN AS INSTRUMENTS OF SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA, HE BELIEVES, AND SO STATED IN A TV INTERVIEW IN MIAMI LAST WEEK, THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT WAS BASICALLY PROVIDING A MERCENARY FORCE IN AFRICA, WITH THE SOVIETS PAYING THE BILLS.

3. FACIO MAINTAINS THAT CUBA IS PAYING A POLITICAL PRICE IN LATIN AMERICA FOR ITS INTERVENTIONISM IN AFRICA. HE RECALLED THAT IN EARLY AND MID-1975 COSTA
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RICA AND SEVERAL OTHER LATIN NATIONS HAD WANTED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH CUBA QUICKLY, BUT STOPPED MOVING APPRECIABLY TOWARD NORMALIZATION WHEN CUBA INTERVENED IN THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR. HE SAID THAT IF CUBA HAD NOT INTERVENED IN ANGOLA AND ELSEWHERE, COSTA RICA AND OTHERS WOULD HAVE RESUMED FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA SOME TIME AGO. FACIO WAS CATEGORICAL IN STATING THAT THE GOCR HAD REFRAINED FROM UPGRADING RELATIONS EARLIER THIS YEAR FOR THIS REASON ALONE. (COMMENT: MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE ELECTION HERE MAY HAVE BEEN A MORE PERSUASIVE FACTOR.)

4. RECENT CUBAN INTERVENTIONISM IN AFRICA HAD RESUSCITATED FEARS OF CUBAN INTERVENTION IN THE AMERICAS JUST AT THE TIME WHEN SUCH FEARS ALMOST HAD DISAPPEARED, ACCORDING TO FACIO. ALTHOUGH FACIO SEES NO PRESENT INDICATION THAT CUBANS INTEND TO BECOME MILITARILY INVOLVED IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND SO CHALLENGE THE U.S. DIRECTLY AND IMMEDIATELY, HE IS CONCERNED THAT CUBANS NOW HAVE THE MILITARY POWER AND LOGISTICAL CAPABILITY TO BECOME INVOLVED. IN THIS CONNECTION HE THOUGHT THAT IF BELIZE WERE MISHANDLED, CUBA IN THIS ONE CASE COULD SEND TROOPS UNDER THE PRETEXT OF HELPING

BELIZE FIGHT A WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

5. FACIO SAID HE HAS NOW ENGAGED IN PREPARATION OF
FINAL VOLUME OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF COSTA RICAN FOREIGN
POLICY UNDER ODUBER. HE INTENDS TO DWELL ON RELATION-
SHIPS WITH CUBA AND TO SPELL OUT THAT CUBA'S AFRICAN
ROLE HAS PREVENTED NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN
TWO COUNTRIES. IN THIS CONNECTION HE REQUESTED PUB-
LISHED MATERIAL ON CUBA'S AFRICAN ROLE AND WE WILL
SUPPLY HIM WHAT IS AVAILABLE. WEISSMAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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